



1 **Estimation of PM_{2.5} Concentration in China Using** 2 **Linear Hybrid Machine Learning Model**

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7 **Abstract.** The satellite remote-sensing aerosol optical depth (AOD) and meteorological elements
8 were employed to invert PM_{2.5} in order to control air pollution more effectively. This paper proposes
9 a restricted gradient-descent linear hybrid machine learning model (RGD-LHMLM) by integrating a
10 random forest (RF), a gradient boosting regression tree (GBRT), and a deep neural network (DNN)
11 to estimate the concentration of PM_{2.5} in China in 2019. The research data included Himawari-8 AOD
12 with high spatiotemporal resolution, ERA-5 meteorological data, and geographic information. The
13 results showed that, in the hybrid model developed by linear fitting, the DNN accounted for the largest
14 proportion, whereas the weight coefficient was 0.62. The R² values of RF, GBRT, and DNN were
15 reported 0.79, 0.81, and 0.8, respectively. Preferably, the generalization ability of the mixed model
16 was better than that of each sub-model, and R² reached 0.84, whereas RMSE and MAE were reported
17 12.92 μg/m³ and 8.01 μg/m³, respectively. For the RGD-LHMLM, R² was above 0.7 in more than 70%
18 of the sites, whereas RMSE and MAE were below 20 μg/m³ and 15 μg/m³, respectively, in more than
19 70% of the sites due to the correlation coefficient having seasonal difference between the
20 meteorological factor and PM_{2.5}. Furthermore, the hybrid model performed best in winter (mean R²
21 was 0.84) and worst in summer (mean R² was 0.71). The spatiotemporal distribution characteristics
22 of PM_{2.5} in China were then estimated and analyzed. According to the results, there was severe
23 pollution in winter with an average concentration of PM_{2.5} being reported 62.10 μg/m³. However,
24 there was slight pollution in summer with an average concentration of PM_{2.5} being reported 47.39
25 μg/m³. The findings also indicate that North China and East China are more polluted than other areas
26 and that their average annual concentration of PM_{2.5} was reported 82.68 μg/m³. Moreover, there was
27 relatively low pollution in Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, and Tibet, for their average PM_{2.5} concentrations
28 were reported below 40 μg/m³.



1 **1 Background**

2 In recent years, pollutants have been discharged increasingly in China where air pollution is
3 becoming worse than ever before due to rapid urbanization and industrialization (Wang et al., 2019a).
4 The fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) with a diameter below 2.5µm is the main component of air pollutants
5 having considerable impacts on human health, atmospheric visibility, and climate change (Gao et al.,
6 2015;Pan et al., 2018;Pun et al., 2017). The global concern about PM_{2.5} has increased significantly since
7 it was listed as a top carcinogen (Apte et al., 2015;Lim et al., 2020). Currently, ground monitoring is the
8 most efficient method of measuring PM_{2.5} (Yang et al., 2018). However, monitoring stations are not
9 evenly distributed due to terrain and construction costs; therefore, it is difficult to obtain a wide range of
10 accurate PM_{2.5} concentration data (Han et al., 2015). To solve the problem, the method of estimating
11 PM_{2.5} with satellite remote-sensing was developed. Satellite remote-sensing is characterized by a wide
12 coverage and high resolution (Hoff and Christopher, 2009;Xu et al., 2021). There is also a high
13 correlation between AOD, obtained from satellite remote sensing inversion, and PM_{2.5}; therefore, AOD
14 is a very effective method of monitoring the spatiotemporal concentration characteristics of PM_{2.5}.

15 After Engel-Cox et al. (2004) proposed using satellite AOD to estimate PM_{2.5} concentration, several
16 studies are reported in the literature to address this theory. Based on the regression model, Liu et al. (2005)
17 introduced AOD, boundary layer height, relative humidity, and geographical parameters as the main
18 controlling factors to estimate PM_{2.5} in the eastern part of the United States, and the verification
19 coefficient R² obtained was 0.46. Tian and Chen (2010) used AOD, PM_{2.5}, and meteorological parameters
20 in Southern Ontario, Canada, to establish a semi-empirical model to predict PM_{2.5} concentration per hour,
21 and the verification coefficient R² obtained in rural and urban areas was 0.7 and 0.64, respectively. Hu et
22 al. (2013) proposed a geography weighted regression model to estimate the surface PM_{2.5} concentration
23 in southeastern America by combining AOD, meteorological parameters, and land use information. Their
24 model average R² was 0.6. Lee et al. (2012) believed that the satellite remote sensing AOD data would
25 be interfered by clouds and snow and ice, and the reliability of the data was questionable. They proposed
26 a mixed model based on AOD calibration to predict the ground PM_{2.5} concentration in New England,
27 USA, and achieved good results (R² = 0.83). Combined with MODIS AOD and ground observation data,
28 Lv et al. (2017) estimated the daily surface PM_{2.5} concentration in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and
29 improved the data resolution to 4 km. The data used in these early studies are AOD products obtained



1 from polar-orbit satellite sensors. The daily observation frequency is limited. Due to the influence of
2 cloud and ground reflection, the dynamic change information of $PM_{2.5}$ cannot be obtained. As a result,
3 geostationary satellite observations can be used to overcome the problem of low temporal resolution for
4 estimating surface $PM_{2.5}$ (Emili et al., 2010).

5 The Himawari-8 satellite commonly used in the Asia-Pacific region is a geostationary satellite
6 launched by the Japan Meteorological Agency in 2014. The observation frequency is 10 minutes, and the
7 observation results can characterize the aerosol and provide AOD data with a resolution of 5 km (Bessho
8 et al., 2016; Yumimoto et al., 2016). Due to its excellent performance, some scholars use Himawari-8
9 data to estimate ground $PM_{2.5}$. Wang et al. (2017) proposed an improved linear model, introduced AOD,
10 meteorological parameters, geographic information to estimate $PM_{2.5}$ in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region,
11 and the verification coefficient R^2 was 0.86. Zhang et al. (2019b) used Himawari-8 hourly AOD product
12 to estimate ground $PM_{2.5}$ in China's four major urban agglomerations. The results showed significant
13 diurnal, seasonal, and spatial changes and improved the temporal resolution of estimating $PM_{2.5}$
14 concentration to the hourly level.

15 As research into ground-based $PM_{2.5}$ estimation deepens, traditional linear or nonlinear models
16 cannot meet the requirements of large-scale estimation and are gradually being replaced by machine
17 learning algorithms with strong nonlinear fitting ability. Liu et al. (2018) combined Kriging interpolation
18 and random forest algorithm to obtain the concentration of high-resolution ground $PM_{2.5}$ in the United
19 States. To demonstrate the accuracy and superiority of the proposed method, the results were compared
20 with the $PM_{2.5}$ concentration in ground measurement stations. Chen et al. (2019) stacked and predicted
21 $PM_{2.5}$ concentration based on a variety of machine learning algorithms, discussed the influence of
22 meteorological factors on $PM_{2.5}$ and achieved an $R^2 = 0.85$. Li et al. (2017a) established a GRNN model
23 for the whole of China to estimate $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, and the results demonstrated that the performance
24 of the deep learning model was better than that of the traditional linear model.

25 A large number of existing studies in the broader literature have examined the estimation of ground
26 $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations using satellite remote sensing AOD. However, the performance of $PM_{2.5}$ estimation
27 models established in the existing studies varies greatly and the performance of the models is not stable
28 in different seasons and regions. To overcome this limitation, in this paper, a linear hybrid machine
29 learning model (RGD-LHMLM) based on random forest (RF), gradient lifting regression tree (GBRT),
30 and deep neural network (DNN) is proposed to estimate ground $PM_{2.5}$ concentration. The model

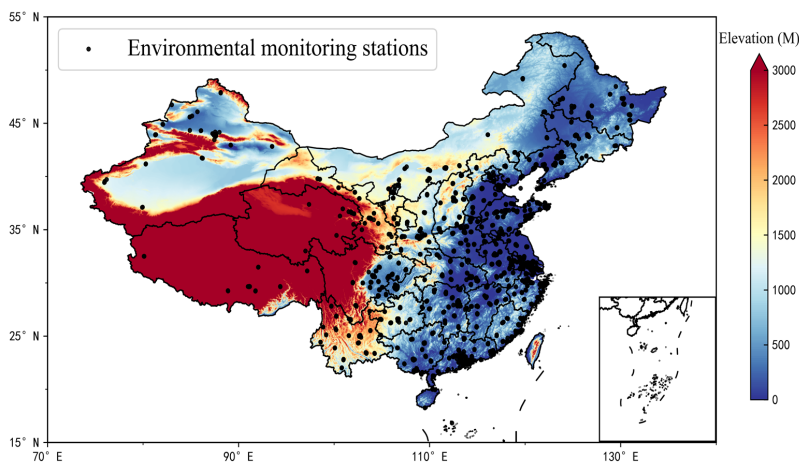


1 performance is evaluated from time and space to analyze its causes. Finally, spatiotemporal distribution
2 of $PM_{2.5}$ concentration in China in 2019 is obtained.

3 **2 Data**

4 **2.1 Ground $PM_{2.5}$ Monitoring Data**

5 $PM_{2.5}$ concentration data for 2019 used in this study are available from the China Environmental
6 Monitoring Center's Air Quality Real-Time Publication System. The system extracts hourly mean $PM_{2.5}$
7 data. By the end of 2019, China had 1641 monitoring stations built and in operation. Figure 1 shows the
8 spatial distribution of monitoring stations in China.



9
10 **Figure 1 Distribution diagram of Environmental monitoring stations in China (2019)**

11 **2.2 Satellite AOD Data**

12 The Himawari Imager (AHI) on the Himawari-8 satellite launched by the Japan Meteorological
13 Agency is a highly improved multi-wavelength imager. It adopts the whole disk observation method and
14 has 16 visible and infrared channels. It has the characteristics of fast imaging speed, flexible observation
15 area, and time. The Level-3-hour AOD product, released by the Japan Aerospace Space Agency (JAXA),
16 provides 500 nm AOD data with a spatial resolution of 5km during the day. In previous studies (Zang et
17 al., 2018), Himawari-8 AOD was compared with the AOD data of AERONET (Aerosol Robotic Network)
18 in China and achieved good performance. The AOD data used in this study is the Himawari-8 Level 3-
19 hour AOD data in 2019 obtained from the Himawari Monitor website of the Japan Meteorological



1 Agency.

2 **2.3 Meteorological Data**

3 ERA-5 reanalysis data is an hourly collection of atmospheric and land-surface meteorological
4 elements since 1979 that the European Centre (ECMWF) has used its prediction model and data
5 assimilation system to "Reanalyse" archived observations. Data used in this paper include surface relative
6 humidity (RH, expressed as a percentage), air temperature at a height of 2 m (TM, expressed as K), Wind
7 speed (U10, V10, in m/s), surface pressure (SP, in Pa), boundary layer height (BLH, in m) and cumulative
8 precipitation (RAIN, in m) at 10 m above the ground. A series of studies has indicated that these
9 parameters can affect the concentration of PM_{2.5} (Fang et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2017; Li et al., 2017b; Wang
10 et al., 2019b).

11 **2.4 Auxiliary Data**

12 The auxiliary data used in this study include high and low vegetation index (LH, LL),
13 ground elevation data (DEM), and population density data (PD). The high and low vegetation
14 index is derived from ERA5 reanalysis data, which respectively represent half of the total green
15 leaf area per unit level ground area of high and low vegetation type. The ground elevation data
16 are derived from SRTM-3 measurements jointly conducted by NASA and the Defense
17 Department's National Mapping Agency (NIMA), with a spatial resolution of 90 m. The
18 population data come from the 2015 United Nations Adjust Population Density data provided
19 by NASA's Center for Socio-Economic Data and Applications (SEDAC), which is based on
20 national censuses and adjusted for relative spatial distribution.

21 **3 Method**

22 **3.1 Random Forest**

23 Random Forest (RF) is built based on the combination of the Bagging algorithm and decision tree,
24 which is an extended variant of the parallel ensemble learning method (Stafoggia et al., 2019). To
25 construct a large number of decision trees, the random forest model takes multiple samples of the sample
26 data. In the decision tree, the nodes are divided into sub-nodes by using the randomly selected optimal
27 features until all the training samples of the node belong to the same class. Finally, all the decision trees



1 are merged to form the random forest. This method has proved to be effective in regression and
2 classification problems and is one of the most well-known Machine learning algorithms used in many
3 different fields (Yesilkanat, 2020).

4 **3.2 Gradient Boosted Regression Trees**

5 Different from the random forest, Gradient Boosting Regression Tree (GBRT) is based on Boosting
6 algorithm and decision tree. The basic principle of GBRT is to construct M different basic learners
7 through multiple iterations, and constantly add the weight of the learners with a small error probability,
8 to eventually generate a strong learner (Johnson et al., 2018). The core of this method is that after each
9 iteration, a learner will be built in the direction of residual reduction (gradient direction) to make the
10 residual decrease in the gradient direction (Schonlau, 2005). The basic learner of GBRT is the regression
11 tree in the decision tree. During the prediction, a predicted value is calculated according to the model
12 obtained. The minimum square root error is used to select the optimal feature to split the dataset, and the
13 average value of the child node is then taken as the predicted value.

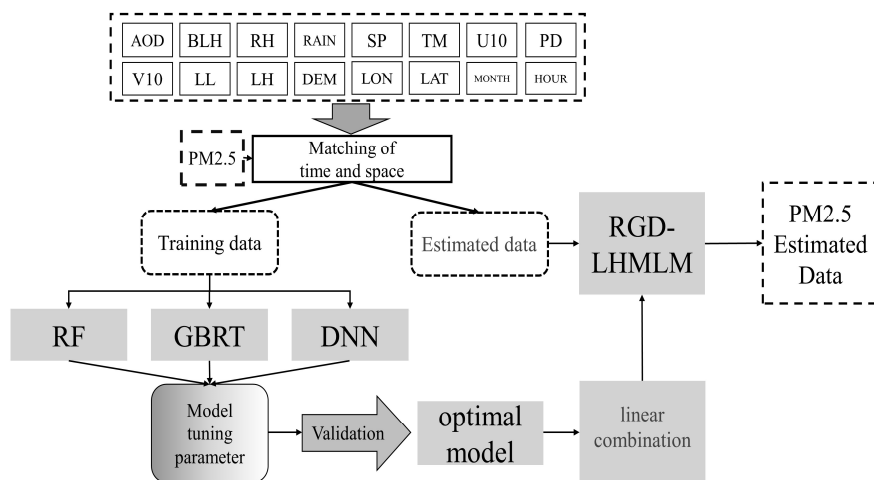
14 **3.3 Deep Neural Networks**

15 Deep Neural Networks (DNN) is a supervised learning technique that uses a backpropagation
16 algorithm to minimize the loss function. It adjusts the parameters through an optimizer, and has high
17 computational power, making it ideal for solving classification and regression problems (Wang and Sun,
18 2019). The structure of DNN includes an input layer, an output layer, and several hidden layers. Each
19 layer takes the output of all nodes of the previous layer as the input, and this process requires activation
20 functions. Compared with other activation functions, the linear rectifying function (ReLU) has the
21 advantages of simple derivation, faster convergence, and higher efficiency. At the same time, among the
22 adaptive learning rate optimizers, the Adamx optimizer performs the best. It not only has the advantages
23 of Adam in determining the learning rate range and having stable parameters in each iteration but also
24 simplifies the method of defining the upper limit range of the learning rate and improves the iteration
25 efficiency (Diederik and Jimmy, 2015). Therefore, in this paper, we selected the Adamx optimizer and
26 ReLU activation function to train the DNN.



1 3.4 Model Establishment and Verification

2 After data processing, RF, GBRT, and DNN are used for modeling. To prevent model parameters
 3 from being controlled by large or small range data and speed up the convergence rate of the model, the
 4 data must be normalized before starting the training process. Finally, the three optimal sub-models are
 5 linear combined to achieve the final mixed model. To verify the model performance, this paper uses the
 6 "10-fold cross-validation" method (Adams et al., 2020). In this method, the data is split into 10 copies, 9
 7 copies for training and 1 copy for verification; this process is repeated 10 times, and then the average of
 8 the 10 predictions is computed as the final result. Finally, the predicted value and the measured value are
 9 fitted linearly. At the same time, several indicators are used to evaluate the model, including the mean
 10 absolute error (MAE, when the predicted value and the true value are exactly equal to 0, that is, perfect
 11 model; The larger the error, the greater the value), the root mean square error (RMSE, when the predicted
 12 value and the real value are completely consistent is equal to 0, that is, the perfect model; The larger the
 13 error, the greater the value), the slope of the fitting equation and the determination coefficient R^2 (the
 14 greater the value, the better the model fitting effect).



15
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Figure 2 Schematic diagram of model

17 4 Results and Discussion

18 4.1 Modeling Results

19 According to the above steps, the mixed model RGD-LHMLM is obtained through modeling



1 verification, and is compared with RF, GBRT, and DNN. The fitting and verification accuracy results of
2 each model are shown in Table 1.

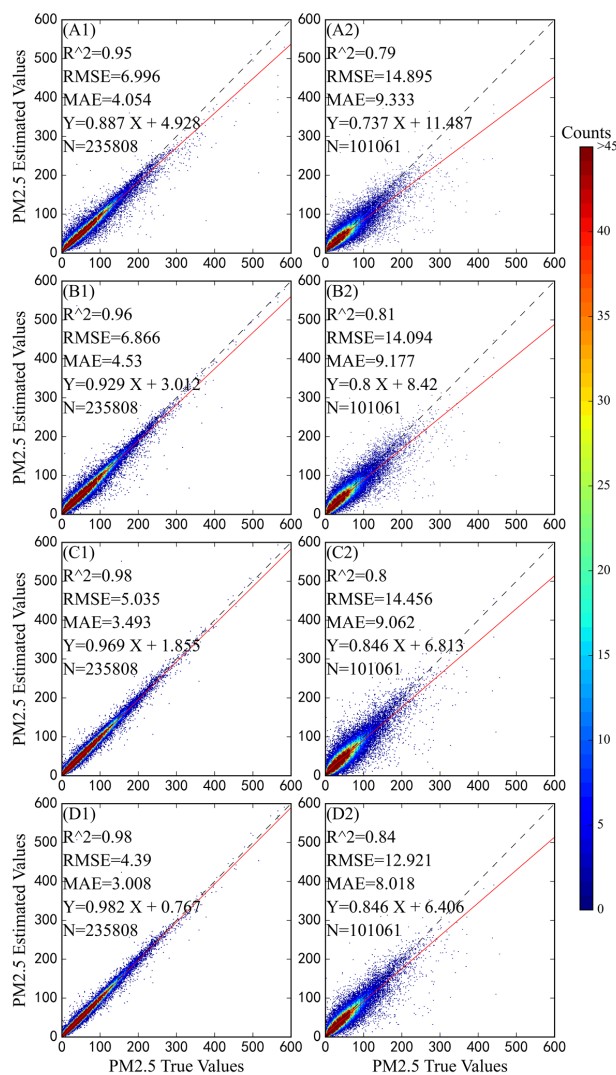
3 **Table 1 Comparison of model accuracy**

Model	Fitting			Validation		
	R ²	RMSE	MAE	R ²	RMSE	MAE
RF	0.95	6.99	4.05	0.79	14.89	9.33
GBRT	0.96	6.87	4.52	0.81	14.09	9.18
DNN	0.97	5.03	3.49	0.80	14.45	9.06
RGD-LHMLM	0.98	4.39	3.00	0.84	12.92	8.01

4
5 The $PM_{2.5}$ inversion results of a single machine learning model show that DNN has the best
6 inversion performance, followed by GBRT, and RF has the worst performance. The expression of the
7 mixing model obtained after linear mixing is as follows:

8
$$PM_{2.5RGD-LHMLM} = 0.25PM_{2.5RF} + 0.17PM_{2.5GBRT} + 0.62PM_{2.5DNN} - 2.13 \quad (1)$$

9 The weight coefficient of DNN in the mixed model was the largest (0.62). The R^2 of RGD-LHMLM in
10 the training set was 0.98, and the RMSE was only $4.39 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, indicating that the model had an excellent
11 data fitting effect. Meanwhile, the generalization ability of the mixed model is also good, with R^2 of 0.84
12 and RMSE of $12.92 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on the validation data set. Compared with RF, GBRT, and DNN, the inversion
13 performance of RGD-LHMLM is significantly improved. In other words, the combination of multiple
14 models can improve the robustness and generalization ability of the model (Wolpert, 1992). The linear
15 fitting equation coefficients between the predicted and measured values in the training set and the
16 verification set were 0.98 and 0.84, respectively, indicating that the prediction accuracy of the model
17 reached a high level. The fitting curve between the model predicted value and the real value is shown in
18 Figure 3. The RGD-LHMLM model has the smallest degree of data dispersion, and the slope of the fitting
19 line reaches 0.84, indicating that 84% of the prediction results are accurate, higher than the three sub-
20 models.



1

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Figure 3 Accuracy of model Fitting and Validation (A: RF, B: GBRT, C: DNN, D: RGD-LHMLM)

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4.2 Model Performance Analysis

4

4.2.1 Performance Analysis of Monitoring Station Model

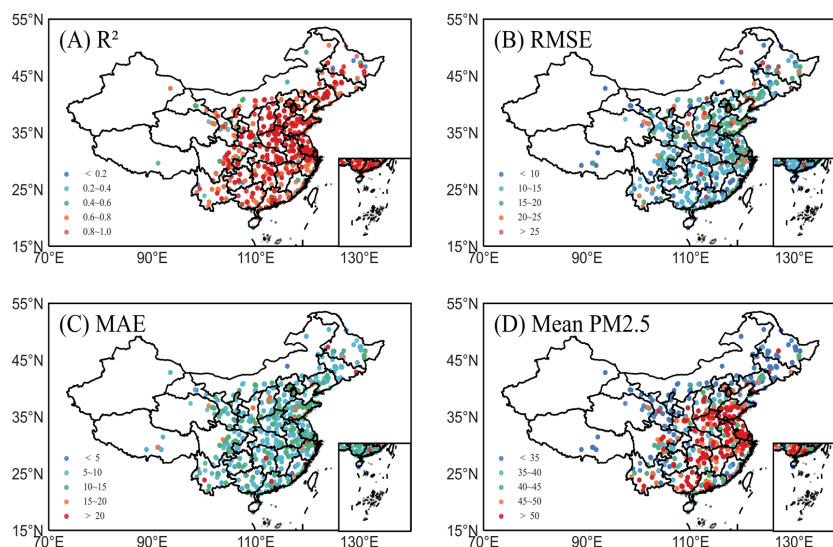
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The spatial performance of the model was analyzed by measuring R^2 , RMSE, and MAE at the monitoring stations. According to Figure 4, there are regional differences in the inversion performance of RGD-LHMLM. At all monitoring stations, the average R^2 was reported 0.74, and R^2 was above 0.7 at more than 70% of the stations, especially in the densely populated and industrially developed areas. The

8



1 model prediction accuracy was reported low ($R^2 < 0.6$) in Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Western Sichuan, and
2 a few other areas of Northeast China. The mean values of RMSE and MAE were reported $11.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
3 and $8.01 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively. In fact, the mean values of RMSE and MAE were below $20 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and 15
4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in more than 95% of stations, something showed a low estimation error.



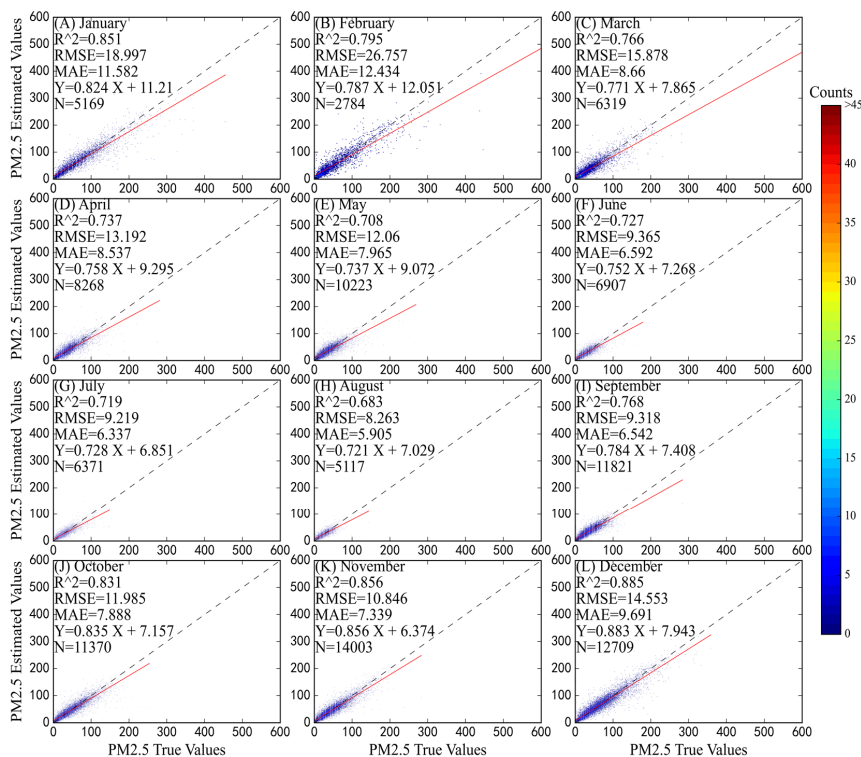
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6 **Figure 4** Model precision parameters (A) R^2 , (B)RMSE, (C)MAE and (D)Mean $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentration site
7 distribution

8 Based on the analysis of spatial differences in the RGD-LHMLM inversion performance, the
9 following deductions can be made. First, the environmental monitoring stations in the central and eastern
10 regions with better inversion performance were distributed densely, and there are large data available;
11 therefore, the model had a satisfactory training effect. Moreover, data matching was lower in the western
12 region than in other regions, something which resulted in model over-fitting and reduced accuracy
13 (Zhang et al., 2018). Second, some areas of western and northeastern China are covered by snow and the
14 Gobi Desert with high surface albedo. This reduces the accuracy of AOD obtained by satellite
15 observation and brings errors to model training. Finally, the Himawari-8 scanning range is limited, and
16 the satellite observation data obtained in Western China are limited in terms of quantity and accuracy. In
17 general, the RGD-LHMLM has a satisfactory spatial performance, especially in areas with high annual
18 average concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$; therefore, it can leave a good inversion effect.



1 4.2.2 Time-Scale Model Performance Analysis

2 Figure 5 shows the inversion performance results of the hybrid model collected from January to
 3 December 2019. The model performed the worst in summer months because R^2 was reported 0.73, 0.72,
 4 and 0.68, respectively; however, RMSE and MAE were only 9.37, 9.22, 8.26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and 6.59, 6.34, and
 5 5.91 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively, due to the lower average concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in summer. Winter and autumn
 6 models gained better performance results with an average R^2 over 0.8. However, in contrast to summer,
 7 the estimation errors of these two seasons were relatively large, with average RMSE of 20.10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and
 8 10.72 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and average MAE of 11.20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and 7.25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively. The mean R^2 was 0.74,
 9 whereas the mean RMSE and MAE were 13.71 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and 8.39 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively.



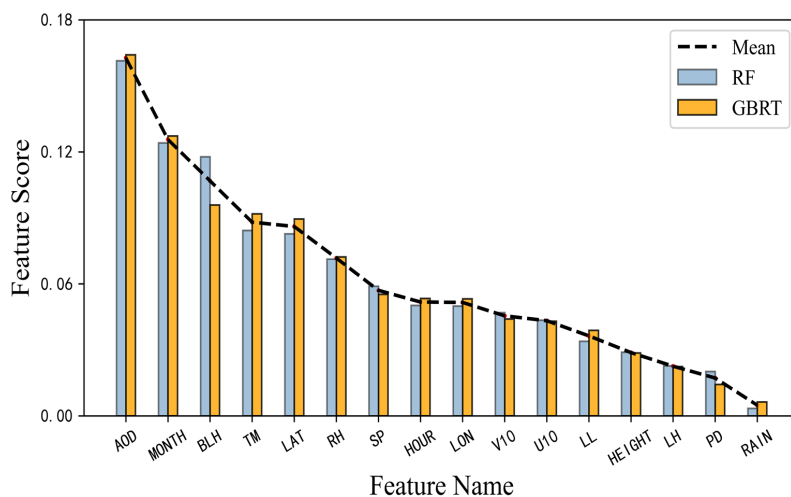
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Figure 5 Monthly model performance fitting scatter diagram in 2019

12 The model performance differences were also analyzed to extract and rank the model features of
 13 RF and GBRT based on the feature importance. The higher the feature importance, the greater the
 14 contribution of factors to the model. Figure 6 shows that AOD, boundary layer height, 2 m surface
 15 temperature, and relative humidity had the greatest effect on the mixed model performance out of all



1 variable characteristic parameters. Accordingly, AOD is greatly affected by the fine particulate matter
2 and is the main factor in the inversion of $PM_{2.5}$. Changes of the boundary layer height can affect the
3 diffusion ability of the atmosphere. If the boundary layer height is low, the accumulation of pollutants
4 will be caused. At the same time, the 2 m surface temperature has a great impact on the boundary layer
5 height (Miao et al., 2018). Finally, higher rates of atmospheric humidity can improve the fine particulate
6 matter accumulation.



7
8 **Figure 6 Importance of model features (represent the contribution of feature factors to the model)**

9 The correlation coefficients between the monthly mean values of important meteorological
10 parameters (AOD, BLH, TM and RH) and R^2 were also analyzed. According to the results, the correlation
11 coefficients between the meteorological parameters and $PM_{2.5}$ were lower in summer. Furthermore, there
12 are many rainy days and large cloud coverage, which is not conducive to satellite observation and
13 decreases the accuracy of AOD data in summer. Therefore, the summer model performance is poor. There
14 was a strong correlation between meteorological parameters and $PM_{2.5}$ in autumn. There were also
15 similar correlations between spring and winter; however, the winter model performed was better. The
16 reasons can be interpreted as below. The winter temperature and boundary layer height are low, whereas
17 the atmosphere is stable but not conducive to the diffusion of pollutants. Moreover, during the heating
18 period in winter, pollutant emissions soar greatly and result in a sharp rise in the concentration of $PM_{2.5}$.
19 The increased pollution in winter ensures the quality and quantity of data, thereby improving the model
20 performance effectively.

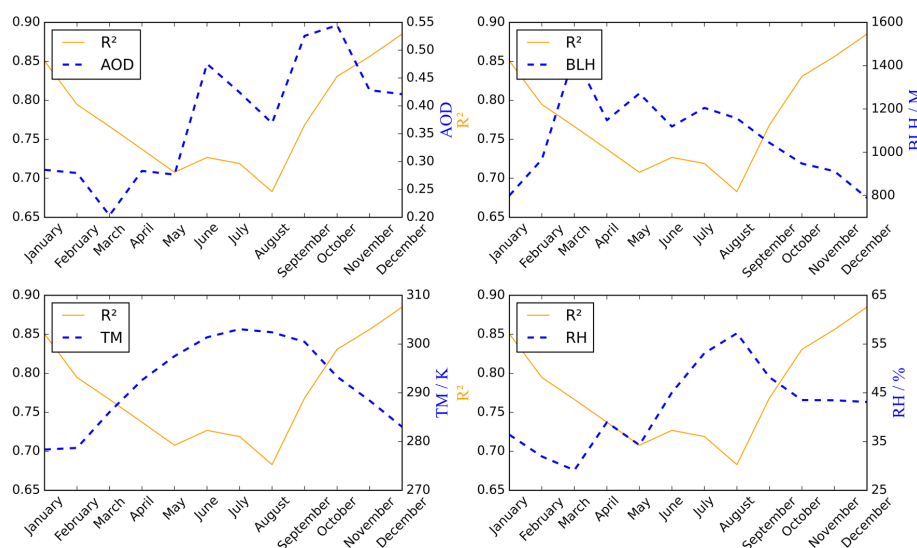


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Table 2 Correlation coefficient between meteorological parameters with PM_{2.5}

Season	AOD	BLH	TM	RH
Spring	0.47	-0.33	0.12	0.36
Summer	0.42	-0.21	0.06	0.19
Autumn	0.38	-0.29	0.24	0.41
Winter	0.44	-0.33	0.12	0.35

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 4



4 **Figure 7 Variation trend of monthly average of meteorological parameters (AOD, BLH, TM, RH) and R²**

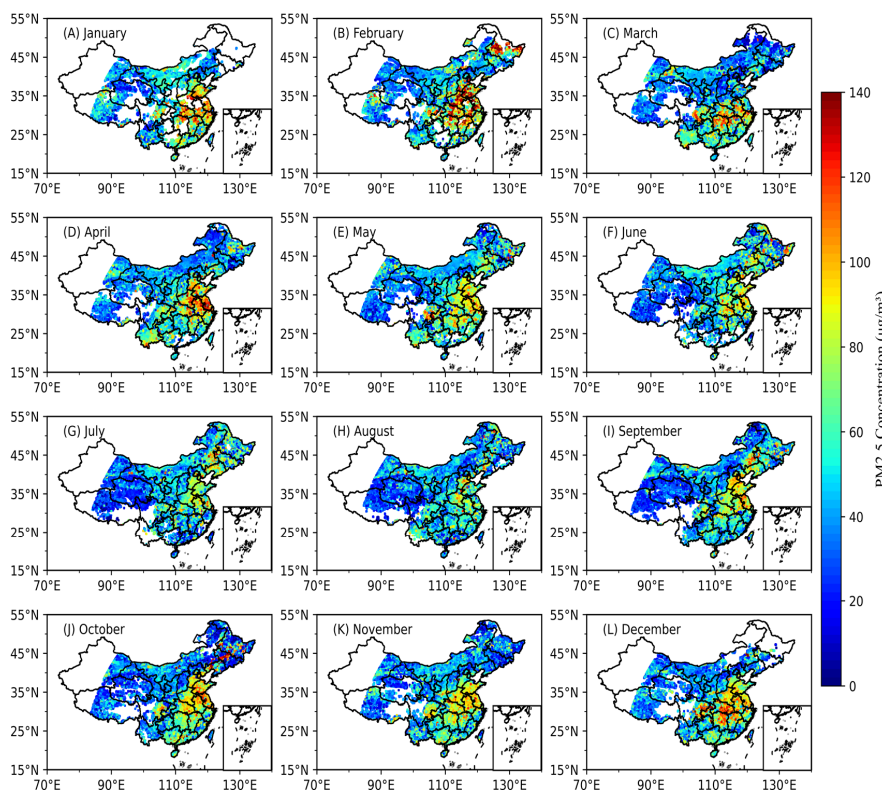
5 **4.3 Temporal and Spatial Distribution Characteristics of PM_{2.5} Concentration in China**

6 In terms of spatial distribution, Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, Anhui, as well as parts of Hubei and
 7 Hebei were the most polluted areas in China in 2019, with an annual average PM_{2.5} concentration of
 8 82.86 µg/m³. On the one hand, these areas are economically developed and densely populated, resulting
 9 in a large amount of pollutant emissions. On the other hand, the barrier of the peripheral mountains
 10 (Taihang Mountains, Qinling Mountains and the Southern Hills) leads to the accumulation of pollutants
 11 that are difficult to diffuse. Sichuan Basin is a rare area with a high PM_{2.5} value due to its unique
 12 topography (Zhang et al., 2019a), with an annual average PM_{2.5} concentration of 64.69 µg/m³. In addition,
 13 Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Tibet and other places, the pollution level is low, the average annual PM_{2.5}
 14 concentration is less than 40 µg/m³.

15 PM_{2.5} concentration in China varies significantly with the seasons. As shown in Figure 8, PM_{2.5}
 16 concentration in winter is the highest, with an average value of 62.10µg/m³. January 2019 was the most



1 polluted month in China, with the average $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentration reaching $63.58\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The average $\text{PM}_{2.5}$
2 concentration was $47.39\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in summer. The average concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in spring and autumn was
3 $54.21\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and $52.26\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively, indicating similar levels of pollution.



4
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Figure 8 Monthly distribution of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentration in China in 2019

6 5 Conclusion

7 It is essential to collect the spatiotemporal evolution characteristics regarding the concentration of
8 $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ for air pollution prevention and containment. Based on the linear hybrid machine learning model,
9 this paper used the AOD data of Himawari-8 to invert the concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in China and obtain its
10 distribution characteristics. The model performance and inversion results are analyzed and summarized
11 below:

12 (1) In the RGD-LHMLM obtained from linear fitting, the DNN accounted for the largest proportion
13 with a weight coefficient of 0.62. The R^2 of RGD-LHMLM was 0.84, whereas its generalization ability
14 was significantly better than that of a single model (DNN: 0.80; GBRT: 0.81; RF: 0.79). Moreover,



1 RMSE and MAE were $12.92 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and $8.01 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, respectively.

2 (2) The RGD-LHMLM was spatially stable, with $R^2 > 0.7$ in more than 70% of sites as well as
3 $\text{RMSE} < 20 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and $\text{MAE} < 15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in more than 95% of sites. These sites are mainly located in densely
4 populated and industrially developed areas. The correlation difference between the inversion factor and
5 $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in various seasons would lead to seasonal variations in the model performance. In addition, the
6 performance was the worst in summer with an average R^2 of 0.71; however, winter showed the best
7 performance with an average R^2 of 0.84.

8 (3) Changes in the spatiotemporal characteristics were obvious in the concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in
9 China. In other words, North China and East China had the highest concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ with an
10 average annual concentration of $82.86 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, whereas Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Tibet, and other regions
11 had low pollution levels with an average annual concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ below $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. In winter, the
12 concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ was higher with an average of $62.10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, whereas the pollution was lighter in
13 summer with an average concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ being reported $47.39 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

14 In conclusion, the RGD-LHMLM can accurately measure the concentration of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and perform
15 the seasonal evolution of pollutants. These results can help control the local pollution. This study also
16 indicated that integrating multiple Machine learning models improved the accuracy of fitting results
17 effectively. For more accurate pollutant data, such models can be employed to fit the $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ in the future
18 with more parameters closely related to $\text{PM}_{2.5}$. However, there are some vacant values in the results of
19 this study. There are also no data for some areas. Thus, other satellite data can be used in future studies
20 to solve this problem.

21 **Data availability**

22 Datasets related to this paper can be requested from the corresponding author (chenbin@lzu.edu.cn).

23 **Author contributions**

24 Chen proposed the content of the study. Song performed data processing, model building, result analysis,
25 and article writing. Huang, Dong and Yang checked the content of the article.



1 **Competing interests**

2 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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